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 in Relation to Current Circumstances

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1. How much MAO Tse-tung has expressed his own thoughts in writing, either penned by himself or recorded by others from his conversations and speeches, is unknown. In 1950, the Publication Bureau of the Northeast government put out a copy of the "Selected Works of MAO Tse-tung", consisting of about 1,000 printed pages which, if translated into English, would run to about 620,000 words. The 20,000 copies of the first edition were rapidly snapped up. There will be no reprint of this edition, since there are many flaws, including some scathing remarks on leading personalities of the party, like LI Li-san, in the days of intra-party struggle. A new edition is being prepared for publication some time this summer as advertised in the papers, and it will consist of about 1,500 pages to include some new pieces culled from the files. So far as it can be found out, all these writings represent MAO's own written or verbal expressions of his thought, and not the work of those under him. In these writings, he expressed himself as one with little theoretical training, but one schooled in practical life.
2. With a few exceptions, almost all of his writings deal with practical measures of the day. They are in the forms of orders to the Party and to political and military organizations, speeches to small groups, editorials on current issues for Party papers, and pamphlets on fundamental policies, such as his "New Democracy," "Coalitioned Government" and the recent "People's Democratic Dictatorship." Among the very few theoretical works is his "On Practice," which was recently widely printed in the press of the Soviet Union in the Russian language, though it was written in 1938.
3. "On Practice," which was extolled by the Russians as a good piece of work on Marxist-Leninist theory, deals with the question of the real source of knowledge in general, and knowledge of revolution in particular. It expounds on the truism, obviously new to MAO, that theoretical knowledge stems ultimately from the practical experience of man, but in order to become reliable, this knowledge has to go through the process of theoretical systematization, which in turn must be constantly verified and improved by practical experience again. The article was couched in philosophical terms, the use of which was not consistently correct, but still it shows he did make an attempt in the direction of theoretical learning in the midst of heavy practical duties.

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4. That attempt was not made voluntarily, for the article was written at the end of the long March, shortly after MAO assumed undisputed leadership of the movement, as an answer to the attacks against him as an ignoramus in the theoretical knowledge of Marxism-Leninism by party members like CH'EN Shao-yu. These men had returned from abroad with the reading knowledge of foreign languages at a time when there were very few Chinese translations in this field, and MAO reads only Chinese. After the publication of this article, the Party rank and file was evidently impressed with and accepted his theoretical prowess, strong enough to be the leader of the party. Also shortly after this came the rectification movement, which among other things, calls for the relinquishment of useless and infantile, pure theories, and his theoretical critics like CH'EN were relegated to a secondary position. From then on, it was MAO the practical man who took up the reins. From this and a few other articles of theoretical character it would appear that MAO does have the ability for complicated abstract thinking, but this faculty is not fully developed.
5. His articles on practical affairs, cover a very wide field, ranging from military and administrative problems to the organization of mass movements. His analysis in all these cases seems to be practical, methodical, and in great detail. His writings on military affairs, for example, represent the analytical summary of his long personal experience in guerrilla fighting. His views on economic problems stem from his handling of simple economic situations in the early days of Kiangsi provincial Red government through the period of war bases in the Japanese rear down to the present day. His articles on government show the long evolution of his thoughts from the guerrilla government of early Kiangsi days through the nominal coalition government, or united front, of the wartime period down to the present. His thoughts on mass movements evolved from his early dealing with the peasant movement, when he was head of the training center for cadres of the peasant movement in Canton in 1926, and widened to cover the organization of the masses of all circles. Here, in the matter of mass movement, he shows the ability to exploit even small details for his political purpose. For example, in a speech at a funeral for an officer, he urged a public funeral ceremony for every worthy worker, using the occasion to get the people together and to focus their attention on the common cause of the revolution, injecting the sentiment of martyrdom in every death.
6. In these practical writings, one does not read high sounding or vague theories nor sweeping statements, but methodical arguments on practical points, neglecting not even the smallest details. In these discussions, he showed a painful effort to employ Marxist terms so as to show his learning in Marxism, but it is plain that he has built up his complex set of knowledge and experience in practical affairs from simple beginnings of actual life and has continued to learn empirically in the main. This does not mean that he does not read. In fact, it is said that he is a diligent reader, much more so than most modern Chinese leaders, such as CHIANG Kai-shek. But his linguistic ability limits him to Chinese material, and people have frequently found him reading old Chinese classics for traditional statesmen, like the voluminous set of Tzu Chih T'ung Chien (資治通鑑). How much of his thinking is derived from the Chinese classical sources is an important question for careful study but a superficial study shows that the phraseology he used in his writings does carry a heavy classical note.
7. MAO's writings show consistency and long persistence of view. In 1950, right after the Communists assumed the reins, a number of his writings, widely published in newspaper and pamphlet form, set forth some of the fundamental principles of government and social organization for the nation to learn and to follow. And his Selected Works is not published for pure academic reference but rather as a live guidance for action now. And yet, very few of his published writings were written within the recent year or two. They were written one or two decades ago. For instance, his "New Democracy" and "Coalition Government", which form the basis of the present Peking government, were both written ten years ago and had been used as the basic

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principles of government in the so-called liberated areas during the War and before the Communists assumed national power.

3. The present crucial policy of alignment of the four classes of China society is based mainly upon MAO's article on the "Analysis of China's Social Classes," which was written in 1926. Much of the actual organization of the agrarian reform movement stems almost directly from his two pieces of rather lengthy writing, on "Rural Investigation" which were published in 1928, although some aspects of the agrarian policy, such as what to do with the rich peasants, have been modified by changed circumstances at the present. The principle of defining the class status of the peasants and the condoning of excesses committed by cadres, such as beating up and insulting landlords as an evil necessary to destroy the deep-rooted prestige and power of the landlord class, were all contained in his writings over two decades ago. Reading his old writings today against the present happenings in China, one gets the feeling that most of them were written for the present moment.
9. The consistency of and the long persistence of MAO's views and policy mean more toward the success of his government than the dogged determination of the man. They mean partly the possession of foresight, and partly the futility of expecting the government to change its fundamental policies and views so long as MAO stays in power. This does not mean that he is inflexible in front of impossible odds. He has said in one place that the course of revolution is a zigzag path, involving many temporary concessions and even retrogression. Temporary concessions he has given in the past and probably will continue to give in the future. But the fundamental principles and objectives will probably never change. The long story of wartime cooperation with the Kuomintang strongly objected to by many leading Party men, but insisted upon by MAO, illustrates just this; and the illustration cannot be more evident than MAO's own turning around to object to any genuine cooperation with the Kuomintang at the time of the New Fourth Army incident, and later during the controversy over the constitutional issue.
10. A burning domestic issue inside Red China is the government's real intention in the disposal of the middle class. Will the Chinese middle class suffer the same fate as Russia's in the interim after Lenin's NEP was put into effect, or will its existence have longer grace during MAO's program of New Democracy as a transition to socialism? MAO's New Democratic program bears close resemblance to the policy and conditions in the five years following 1924, when Lenin made temporary concessions to private interests. So experience of the USSR seems to be China's model. On the other hand, MAO, as expressed in his writings, seems to consider China's middle class very important in China's social structure, and so he may mean what he says when he maintains that the period of New Democracy in which the existence of the middle class is permitted may last fifteen to twenty years. He has reiterated China's society is shaped like an olive, large in the middle and tapering off at the two ends, and that no policy will succeed if it does not try to win the support of the middle elements.
11. This view on the middle class has caused repeated controversy in the Party. But, granting his sincerity in his expressed policy towards the middle class, which affects a good number of other vital issues, the duration of this policy will depend on the balance of power between him and the internationalist group, which insists upon following the USSR model with little alteration or consideration for the native setting.
12. His policy of alignment with the USSR is a consistent one, as seen from his early writings down to very recent ones, though how close and exclusive such alignment should be remains a question. Very probably his earliest activity in Hunan in 1923 and 1924, organizing the peasants there, were financed by the Soviets, as hinted in the recently published "History of the New Democracy Revolution". His support for the alliance with the USSR as a condition for Communist cooperation with the Kuomintang earlier was a strong and unequivocal one. During the war when the Soviets made peace with the Axis Powers, MAO

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wrote scathing articles against the Western democracies in Europe for fomenting war until Germany turned on Russia; this was the same line followed by the Communist Party in the United States. He showed a certain amount of friendliness toward the U.S. and some Americans in China during the war, but so did the Soviets in the same period.

13. Soon after the war ended, he rapidly reverted to the old policy especially when American aid went to the Kuomintang side in the civil war. After his return from Chungking to Yenan, his articles attacking Hurley presaged clearly his present "lean to one side" policy and his enmity toward the U.S. Probably no circumstance can turn him away from this line, particularly if he wants to retain his leadership in the Party which contains a strong internationalist faction. He expressed himself pretty clearly, when the regime was being established, when he said that the Communist revolution is an international movement, that no revolution in China can hope to succeed alone without assistance from abroad, and that the party should not entertain any false expectation from the U.S. which has helped the party's enemy in waging the civil war.
14. With the commitment on the Korean adventure, the terrific anti-American propaganda campaign has worked up such a hysteria among the Party members and their non-Party associates that it is virtually impossible for MAO and the Party to allow the slightest deviation from the line, even if they want to, short of a major change in the internal power structure, or the U.S. granting all of the Peking demands.
15. MAO is no reformer. Throughout his public career, he has been a socialist revolutionist in the truest sense. The fact that he was not educated in Moscow makes little difference in this respect. In his writings, he has repeatedly condemned reformism as a form of reaction against the revolution. He made efforts to win support from liberals during the War; however, as soon as the Party assumed power, he lost no time in making it clear to the nation that liberalism is a subversive influence, a form of reactionism that must be guarded against. The only grace granted to the liberals and reformists is the interim period in which they must educate themselves to learn and to accept unconditionally the Communist doctrine. MAO seemed to understand thoroughly Stalin's distinction between a revolutionist and reformers or liberals of all shades, as he states in his "History of the Communist Party of the USSR." A revolutionist according to MAO's writings, is marked by his firm conviction in the thorough destruction of the capitalist system, by revolution and not reform, and by dictatorship of the proletariat in the indefinite period of transition toward Communism. Those who believe in the necessity of some change from the capitalist system but not in the second and third points are guilty of misleading the course of the revolution and doom it to failure, and therefore they are dangerous reactionaries. What differentiates MAO from the extremists is his patience and his willingness to take ample time to reeducate the deviators and recalcitrants in the period of transition. He said in one of his writings recently that, it is wrong to stand still and to refuse to learn the new ways of life, but it is equally wrong to force learning hastily. Whatever MAO's policy toward reformers and liberals, he never was one among them, and not even his own Party critics ever accused him of being one.

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